

## **During this pandemic, in what way is Joy a fruit of the Holy Spirit?**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, after listing the things that are not of the Spirit, goes into the list of the things that are of the Spirit. Galatians 5: 22-23 lists, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." St. Paul, in reference to "fruit," means "the result of labor," and the laborer is the Holy Spirit. In our faith, if we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, the fruits of the Spirit will also be visible.

Joy is a natural response to a gift. In Scripture, the gift always originates with God, whether it be the coming of the Messiah, the Resurrection of Christ, God's power over the sinful world, or God's salvation for mankind. God's grace and His work can bring about joy, especially the joy in seeing God's redeeming work in other people.

In our world today, we do not always view joy in relation to God. We are taught to value possessions, power, and positions, but true joy is not found in those things. In John's Gospel 15: 1-11, he says that joy comes from abiding in Christ's love. St. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians 2: 2, says, "complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing." In 1 John 1: 1-4, he says that complete joy is being united with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

There are many things in the world that can bring joy, but do we recognize God's hand in those things? God, many times, will bring healing to individuals, put an individual in a position of power in order to do good, or bless individuals with material possessions, again to do good with. The important thing to remember is that it is God who is providing the blessings. We can appreciate the gifts and rejoice that He may have chosen us for these things. We should have joy in the Giver and not just in the gift received.

In our current worldly situation, it is important to remember these things because for most of us, these are not joyful days with churches locked, no public Masses available, and the many other hardships that we must face. In James 1: 2-4, we read, "Consider it all joy, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance be perfect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

We know that true joy is only found in Jesus. When we recognize God's work and gifts in our lives, we will always have joy. Even during these challenging times, our joy remains because it depends upon God. Invite the working of the Holy Spirit into your life so that you can have the fruit of joy always. Don't lose hope, keep the faith, pray the rosary every day, and know that God is with us unto the end of the world. Jesus, I Trust in You! Mary, pray for us.

In Christ,

Fr. Dan